

# **EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT**

**East Providence City Hall**

**145 Taunton Avenue**

**East Providence, Rhode Island 02914**

## **School Committee Special Meeting**

**March 24, 2009**

### **Open Session**

**Mr. Carcieri called the meeting to order at 6:00PM. School Committee members present: Shannon Barbosa, Robert Faria, Steven Santos, Anthony Carcieri (Luisa Abatecola arrived later). Also present: Dr. Mario F. Cirillo, Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Edward Daft, Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Lonnie Barham, Chief Operating Officer, Daniel Kinder, Esq.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Santos to convene in Executive Session for purposes of discussing: Personnel: One Individual - R.I. Gen. Laws § Section 42-46-5– (a) (1), Collective Bargaining: Teachers' Contract, Teacher Assistants' Contract, Secretaries' Contract, Principals' Association Contract & Custodians' Contract pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § Section 42-46-5 (a) (2), and Litigation: R.I. Gen. Laws § Section, seconded by Mrs. Barbosa. Vote unanimous.**

**The School Committee returned to Public Session at 7:10PM. A motion was made by Mr. Santos to seal the minutes of the executive session, seconded by Mrs. Barbosa.**

**Vote 5-0.**

**The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence were observed.**

**Record of Previous Meetings – A motion was made by Mrs. Barbosa to approve the minutes of meetings held on February 10, 2009 and February 24, 2009, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote 4-0.**

**Report of Superintendent and Staff - Dr. Cirillo recommended the appointment of Dr. Caroline Caswell to the position of Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Professional Development. A motion was made by Mr. Faria to approve, seconded by Mr. Santos. Discussion: Mr. Faria asked about the process. The Superintendent explained that the position was advertised internally and initially, two candidates came forward. Mrs. Abatecola asked about the high school principal position, which would now become vacant. Dr. Cirillo will place a retired administrator, Mr. Donald Fredericks, to fill in at the high school until we can fill that position before the new school year. Roll Call vote: Mrs. Abatecola, aye; Mrs. Barbosa, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mr. Carcieri, aye.**

**Dr. Caswell highlighted some of the projects she will be focusing on: seamless K to 12 curriculum; GSE and GLE's; vertical team K-12 instruction; move to a skill based system; assessments which are meaningful to students and improve NECAP testing; improvement of professional development; invigorating graduation requirements to bring everyone along; graduation proficiency; and program evaluations.**

**Dr. Cirillo commended Dr. Caswell on her success as Principal of East Providence High School and hoped this new position will allow her to use her expertise to influence the entire district. Dr. Cirillo also thanked Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Edward Daft, who will be assuming new duties, overseeing Educational Services for the schools.**

**Mr. Faria also commended Dr. Caswell for her accomplishments at the high school over the last few years, particularly related to implementing the new graduation requirements; he felt that she has exemplified what a high school principal should be.**

**Personnel Recommendations – Mr. Lonnie Barham presented the following personnel items:**

#### **Appointments**

**Patricia Almquist    Director of Guidance – High School**

**George Currier    English/ELA Dept. Head – High School**

**Darlene Hall    Liaison – High School**

**Joel Swan    Liaison – High School**

**Lynn Card-Kohanski    Liaison – High School**

**Michael Almeida    Coach, Boys' Track – MMS**

**Glen Salgueiro    Coach, Baseball – MMS**

**Tricia Barry (1 yr only)    Coach, Girls' Track – MMS**

**Jay Neveu (1 yr only)    Asst. Coach, Boys' Volleyball-High School**

**Robin Seel    Supervisory Aide- Waddington**

**Motion: Mr. Faria/Seconded: Mrs. Abatecola. Roll call vote: Mrs. Abatecola, aye; Mrs. Barbosa, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mr. Carcieri, aye.**

## **Recall**

**Lisa Goulden (currently on lay off) Secretary (Retirement)**

**Gail Costa (currently on temp. recall) Secretary (Reorganization Plan)**

**No Votes**

## **Retirements**

**Peter Tartaglia (12.6 yrs.) Math Teacher – EPHS**

**Patricia Sroka (26 yrs.) English Teacher – EPHS**

## **Personal Leave**

**Julie Braga    Spanish Teacher - EPHS**

**2009-2010 School Year**

## **Family Medical Leave**

**Jacquelyn Barker    Grade 3 Teacher – Orlo**

**Approx. 5/11/09 – End of school year**

**No Vote**

**Letter from High School Improvement Team – Dr. Cirillo received a letter from the East Providence High School Improvement Team regarding the recent NEASC report and the accreditation of East Providence High School. He attended a meeting of the high school improvement team and discussion took place regarding the response to the NEASC report which is due on May 1, 2009. Dr. Cirillo advised that the recommendations which are listed under five general headings, will be addressed. At the SIT meeting, many interesting points were made on some salient issues. The SIT Team would like the issues addressed and had concerns about the lack of discussion at the School Committee level; they felt that the public needed to be made aware of the warning status which could lead to a lack of accreditation. Dr. Cirillo provided an update on what is being done to address the issues and hoped that East Providence will be taken off warning status.**

**Mr. Faria said this is an absolute necessity that does not get enough attention; he agrees with the parents that the high school building is an evacuation point for the city; other districts have technology, but we do not have it; some of our students have not seen SMART Boards; the kids need it to be able to compete. He felt that this city has not given enough attention to this situation. Mr. Faria supports**

the proposal and he asked to set up a date for a meeting on this topic. (No vote required).

School Calendar 2009-10 – Dr. Cirillo was reluctant to recommend the adoption of this calendar with a late start, since Labor Day falls on September 7th. (Teachers return on September 8th and students on September 9th). Dr. Cirillo attempted to talk with the teachers' union (EPEA) about this; however there is a provision in the contract that the work year cannot be earlier than the first Tuesday in September. He received a letter from the EPEA which voted to adhere to that contract language. A second change is the 2010 spring vacation which is scheduled the third week of April due to a statewide house resolution suggesting that spring vacation in RI be held in line with the MA date for purposes of consistency. The RI School Superintendent's Association supported this and Dr. Cirillo recommended approval. A motion was made by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mrs. Barbosa. After discussion, a roll call vote was taken: Mrs. Abatecola, aye; Mrs. Barbosa, aye; Mr. Faria, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mr. Carcieri, aye.

New Business - Policy I.E. (School Committee Bylaws) Section 6. Order of Business - Proposal to Amend – policy change – Dr. Cirillo explained the changes to the agenda format which include guidelines for public comment and a communication request form for speakers which needs to be submitted to the Superintendent's office one week before the meeting in order to be included on the agenda under

## **Public Comment. (First reading- no vote required).**

### **Public Comment**

**Thomas Riley – Pawtucket Avenue – followed up on the Whiteknact testing incident; he was under the impression that the exam ran over, when it really was two days later that kids were called back in for coaching. He was concerned that this was not adequately addressed and was swept under rug. If he were a teacher at Whiteknact School, he would be irate because no one knows for sure how well the students did because of that incident; this was a disservice to students and teachers. He would like a solid answer.**

**Roberta Brady – resident, parent, school employee, asked about being able to ask questions at a public meeting; she lives here and the School Committee was elected by the tax payers; she and any one else should be free to ask a question of a public official. She was concerned that people would be commenting on past meetings after decisions have been made, which would mean nothing. She does not agree with everything which goes on at meetings and expects people should have right to question, not before, but during and after. In reference to requesting to ask a question through the Superintendent, who is not a resident of the city, some one can do all that and still not have an opportunity to get answers. Teachers could give civics lesson to the School Committee who need it.**

**David Nelson – Cedar Wood Drive –Is this a manipulative School Committee or protector of the educational system; young families are coming to the city, which can be well established or go down like other cities – education is important; it brings people to the city. He spoke about the City Council usurping School Committee’s authority to approve contracts. Is the agenda in keeping with health and welfare of our city; look at the wages, East Providence is more in the middle; there is nothing out of line. This agenda is undermining the future of the school system. He teaches and he and his wife are watching what is happening in the neighborhoods and to the future of the school system. The City Council says nothing about rebuilding our city; the School Committee has no money and no plan. Why not establish a relationship/contract (with teachers), without bullying, like Barrington and some other communities did. What is going on in East Providence is direct undermining by the City Council. He implored the School Committee to watch what is happening to the educational system, and for a three to five year plan, as this agenda will not get us where we need to be**

**Mike McGuinn – spoke regarding the proposal to amend public comment, which he thinks is disturbing. If there are things relevant to tonight’s meeting, it is imperative that the School Committee hear what people say; they need to hear both sides and it does not make sense to censor public comment because people do not agree. Regarding the NEASC accreditation, he has not heard what the penalties are for non accreditation. This School Committee created a**



**position for Dr. Caswell, after saying there is no money.**

**Amy Watson –teacher at Whiteknact was outraged by people who suspect teachers and put words in other people’s mouths. She welcomes all to come into the school. She tests students every day not just in October. Her colleagues are not doing anything wrong for kids. The community relies on NECAP scores, teachers do not. There was no malicious intent on the part of any staff at Whiteknact School regarding testing.**

**Valerie Lawson, 15 Wood Hollow – questioned the new policy; she missed items from a prior meeting about Blue Cross; she has concerns about going on the docket with no comment on what transpires at the meeting. She asked that this policy be reconsidered as it is detrimental to good government . She thought that open government and public policy is what the community wanted; maybe it could be made to work so people can get a timely response.**

**Mary Texeira – has been attending City Council and School Committee meetings every Tuesday as a hobby. The School Committee allows people to come up and comment on what is going on; now if someone is not on the docket, they cannot speak. She said that when people speak, it may spark a conversation and there needs to be some opportunity for people to ask questions. Maybe the time to speak can be limited. She felt this change to the agenda and the form to sign up to speak was a mistake; people should be**

**allowed to speak.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Santos to adjourn at 8:15PM, seconded by Mr. Faria**

**Vote 5-0.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant**

**Shannon Barbosa, Clerk of the Committee**